



## Measles Outbreak in Utah

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### Public Health Efforts

#### 1) What is the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) doing to prevent the spread of measles in Utah?

The UDOH is working with local health departments, school districts and hospitals, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that all persons who have been exposed to measles are contacted and provided appropriate information about vaccination, exclusion, quarantine and medical care.

#### 2) What should I do if I don't know my vaccination status or I never had the MMR vaccine?

Individuals who may have been exposed to measles and have not been vaccinated should stay home (no work, church, or recreational activities); specifically those who have been contacted by health officials and those students who were excluded from school due to lack of vaccination.

The MMR vaccine may prevent disease if given with 72 hours of exposure to measles. Immune globulin (IG) may prevent or reduce severity of disease if given within 6 days of exposure.

It is very important to follow the directions given by your healthcare provider and public health in order to protect your own health, and the health of those around you.

#### 3) Where can I find information about my vaccination record or my child's vaccination record?

Contact your healthcare provider to get information on your family's immunization records.

The Utah Immunization Information System (USIIS) is a state-wide immunization database that contains vaccination records of children and some adults. You may contact the Utah Immunization Program at 801-538-9450 or the Utah Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659 to request a search for immunization records in USIIS.

Measles vaccine is available through pediatricians, family physicians, local health departments and community health centers. For a list of local health departments, visit <http://ualhd.org/Department/Department.htm>.

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Measles

## Disease Information

### 1) What is measles?

Measles is a highly infectious respiratory disease caused by the measles virus.

### 2) What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms include rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. These symptoms usually appear within 10-14 days from exposure to an infected person and last about a week. The disease can also cause severe illness and complications, such as diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis (brain infection), seizures, and death. These complications are more common among children under 5 years of age and adults over 20 years of age.

### 3) How is measles spread?

Measles spreads easily. When an infected person sneezes or coughs, droplets containing the virus spray into the air. Those droplets can land in other people's noses or throats when they breathe or if they put their fingers in their mouth or nose after handling an infected surface. The measles virus can survive for 2 hours in air or on surfaces.

It is also important to know that people with measles are infectious (can spread the disease) from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears. Thus, an infected person can spread the disease before knowing he or she is infected.

### 4) Is measles common in other parts of the world? What is the risk to U.S. residents?

Measles is a common disease in many countries throughout the world. It is possible that people from other countries who visit the United States could be ill with measles. To prevent getting measles from overseas visitors, U.S. residents should make sure they have been appropriately vaccinated.

## Vaccine Recommendations

### 1) How can I protect my child and myself against measles?

The best protection against measles for individuals and the community is through routine immunization with MMR vaccine, if you or your child has not previously had the measles disease. The MMR vaccine is a combined vaccine that protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. In almost all cases, people who receive the MMR vaccine are protected against measles. However, in rare cases, people who get the vaccine can still become infected with measles if exposed to the virus. Two doses of MMR vaccine provide full protection against measles to 99 out of every 100 persons vaccinated.

Measles vaccine is available through pediatricians, family physicians, local health departments and community health centers. For a list of local health departments, visit <http://ualhd.org/Department/Department.htm>.

## 2) At what age should children get the MMR vaccine?

Children should receive the first dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age (or no earlier than 28 days after the first dose). Older children who have not been vaccinated should receive two doses of MMR vaccine at least 28 days apart.

The recommended age for receiving MMR vaccine might change if there is a measles outbreak or if you will be traveling to a foreign country. In such cases, check with your child's healthcare provider to ensure that your child is properly vaccinated to protect against measles.

## 3) Do adults need to be vaccinated against measles?

All U.S adults born during or after 1957 should also get at least one dose of MMR vaccine, unless they can show they either had the vaccine or measles disease or have a blood test that shows they are immune to measles. For certain groups of adults (for example, those who provide healthcare), two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended. More specific recommendations for measles vaccination are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/default.htm>.

## 4) Are there people who should not get the MMR vaccine?

Yes, some people should not get MMR vaccine or should wait before getting it. This includes persons with allergies to components of the vaccine and those with medical conditions that preclude vaccination. If you have further questions, discuss them with your healthcare provider.

# School Vaccine Requirements

## 1) Is the MMR vaccine required for children in Utah schools?

Yes. All children, kindergarten through grade 12, are required to have two doses of the MMR vaccine.

## 2) Is the MMR vaccine required for children in childcare facilities?

Yes. One dose of the MMR vaccine is required for children at 12-15 months of age. Children younger than 12 months of age cannot be vaccinated. Therefore, it is important that other children and close contacts who can be vaccinated receive the MMR vaccine at the recommended age.

## 3) Can children attend school or childcare if they have not been vaccinated against measles?

Utah school law allows children in schools and childcare facilities to claim an exemption to vaccines for personal, medical or religious reasons. However, **in the event of an outbreak**, children in schools and childcare facilities who claimed an exemption will be excluded to reduce the potential of contracting measles.

Children who have not been vaccinated and have been exposed to measles will be excluded from school or childcare for 21 days after the onset of rash in the last measles case.

## Vaccine Safety

### 1) Is the MMR vaccine safe?

The MMR vaccine has been in use for more than three decades in the U.S., and reports of serious adverse events following vaccination have been extremely rare. As with all vaccines, there can be minor reactions from the MMR vaccine. These reactions might include pain and redness at the injection site, headache, fatigue, or a vague feeling of discomfort.

When reports of severe vaccine-related adverse events are made, they are taken seriously and investigated appropriately. It is important to know that the risk of MMR vaccine causing serious harm or death has been extremely small and that being vaccinated is much safer than getting any of the three diseases (measles, mumps, and rubella) the vaccine protects against.

## Resources

For more information about measles, contact your healthcare provider, local health department, community health center or the Utah Department of Health.

**Utah Department of Health  
Bureau of Epidemiology**  
801-538-6191

**Immunization Program**  
801-538-9450

**Utah Immunization Hotline**  
1-800-275-0659

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

**Utah Local Health Departments**  
<http://ualhd.org/Department/Department.htm>

**Utah Community Health Centers**  
<http://www.auch.org/community-health-centers/find-a-health-center>